PRECAUTIONS AGAINST ASSASSINATION.

(From the London *Spectator*.)

THERE is, so far as we can see, no possible method of preventing a repetition of such a crime short of locking up the sovereign in a well-guarded prison. The bowling has permanently beaten the batting. Modern science has applied itself to the work of destruction, and there is no longer any possibility of protecting a life for which a resolute enemy is willing to give his own. The use of the knife can be prevented, for it pre-supposes contact; and what with guards, rapid driving, and incessant watchfulness, contact between a sovereign and an enemy can be rendered nearly, if not quite, impossible. The sovereign can be armed, too, and can make as good a fight for his life against the dagger as any other soldier. Even the use of the rifle can be prevented, partly by armour, partly by mailed carriages, and partly by the constant interposition of attendants between the sovereign and any point from which he could be threatened. It used to be said of Napoleon, as he drove up the Champs Elysees, that it was impossible to "cover" him with a stick; and that was very nearly, though not literally, true. No man along the line could have drawn a pistol without some Corsican seeing him. The movement of guards distracts the marksman, who, though he does not care whether he kills the innocent or not, does exceedingly care not to miss the aim.

But neither these precautions nor any other are of avail against one or two men throwing in succession bombs powerful enough to blow up a carriage or shatter a crowd. There are always points at which a cavalcade really enters a pass, or approaches some foreseen angle, and assassins stationed at the side have only, as it were, to pitch a cricket ball tolerably straight to change the succession to a throne. If the murderer knows how to measure distance, the speed of the carriage is useless, the iron plates give way, the guards are destroyed like him they guard, and the sovereign is slain as he would be slain if a shell reached him in the midst of armies. Of course, if by any chance he leaves the carriage, the chances are increased by his immobility. The only conditions required are that the assassins shall be careless of escape, that they shall have bombs, and that they shall just have nerve enough at the moment to pitch straight; and none of these conditions can be absolutely prevented. True courage is hardly required, only a kind of resignation, very common in some races, especially among women.

Few of the assassins of recent days have cared to escape. Hodel made no effort, nor did Solovieff, nor, till her acquittal, Vera Sassulitsch, nor is there a method of shaking their nerve, They risk always one of the most horrible of fates—lynching by an excited mob, which breaks their bones. Horrible punishments, even if modern feeling would allow them, would not do it, for you could not go beyond breaking on the wheel or burning alive, both of which have been tried, the one in France, the other in the Southern States of America, and both have failed. The modern fanatical assassin is always ready to commit suicide, and on a man raised or lowered to the suicide temper, threats of inflicting torture have no effect. He will only kill himself, and so baffle enquiry into his motives and resources. Nor is it possible to confine the use of explosives to known persons. Laws to that effect only drive the criminals to learn chemistry for themselves—that is, invest them with a new power of keeping their own secrets. Any student of chemistry can make gun cotton or nitro-glycerine, and powder is an article which must be manufactured, and if manufactured can be stolen.

Granted a few resolute conspirators, with one man of education among them, and some little command of money, and no conceivable laws or rules of police or detective arrangements, can prevent their making and carrying and throwing bombs, which are as dangerous to the victims as hostile batteries, only fifty yards off. Science has armed the assassins, and governments, with all their endless resources in men and material, are almost as powerless as if their opponents could wield the lightning or direct the course of earthquakes.

WHY HE DID SO.

(From the Baltimore *Gazette*.)

REV. EDWARD WINSLOW GILLIAM, late Protestant Episcopal clergyman and rector of Clinton (N.C.) Church, who, in January last, resigned his charge on account of certain theological doubts, and announced his attention of becoming a Catholic, is at St. Mary's Seminary on North Pacca street, and is the guest of the Catholic Fathers connected with that institution. Mr. Gilliam went to St. Mary's on April 11, to obtain, as he says, rest from doubts of a most conflicting and torturing nature which assailed him as to the truth of the teachings of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Those doubts were brought about by reading Episcopal books, and covered a period of seven or eight years.

In an interview with a *Gazette* representative at St. Mary's recently, Mr. Gilliam gave a short history of his life and the causes which resulted in his defection from the Protestant Episcopal Church. He was born in Oxford, N.C., and is the son of Dr. James C. Gilliam, and nephew of Judge Gilliam, both of Oxford. He was educated in the town of his birth until he became seventeen or eighteen years of age, when he was sent to the University of North Carolina, where he graduated. He then returned to Oxford, where he studied law under his uncle, Judge Gilliam, but not liking the profession renounced it, and entered upon a study of theology and divinity for the Episcopal ministry under Bishop Atkinson in 1863, and was given the charge of a church. Shortly afterward he married. He went from one charge to another in North Carolina, but his ministry was not confined to that State. He filled several churches in Texas, on the Red River, and in 1878 or 1879 returned to North Carolina, and took charge of the Protestant Episcopal church in Clinton. He gave general satisfaction wherever he went, and until 1874 or 1872 he was a sound theologian and a strict believer in the tenets of the Church in which he was ordained.

"About that time, however," to continue in his words, "I began to doubt the soundness of my faith. I was a close student of Cranmer's life, and read with the utmost care and studied Brown's thirty-nine articles, from which and Cranmer I conceived that the Roman Catholic Church alone possessed the rightful power to interpret the meaning of the Scripture. Remember, now, that it was not from Roman books that I drew this conception, which has now grown into a firm and irrevocable belief. It was strictly from Episcopal works, and the idea was drawn from the rules of the faith and canon of Scripture. The rule of faith is the teaching of Scripture with regard to points essential to salvation, and the doubt rose in my mind whether it was not that the Roman Catholic teaching was the right and the Protestant Episcopal the wrong one. With regard to the canon of Scripture the doubt was whether the Roman Catholic Church was not alone empowered with authority to speak as to its interpretation and its divine derivation. These doubts began to assail me eight years ago. I bore up under them as best I could, but they were torturing. For five or six years I continued to discharge the duties of my sacred calling, and tried to believe implicitly what I taught, but I could not. The demon of doubt was upon me, and night after night I sat up and wrote out my thoughts, and year by year enlarged them as new ideas occurred to me. All this was done secretly, and I tried as much as possible to divert the attention of my congregation from myself, so that they would not discover what was passing in my mind. I think I was successful in this, and that they never knew, until I made it known that I did not believe all I said. I never mentioned it to any one; not even my wife knew of it. I bore it as long as possible, and at last I could stand it no longer. I resigned my charge at Clinton the first of last January, and after I had got the papers upon which I had inscribed and elaborated my doubts and thoughts in good shape I went to Bishop Lyman and stated the trouble. The Bishop argued with me and presented his convictions, the teachings of the Church, &c., but none of them would remove the difficulties, and I could think of nothing else to do but to come to Baltimore and confer with Archbishop Gibbons. The Archbishop coincided with me in the main, but corrected me on several points and advised me to do as I have done. His advice was in accordance with my desires, and I came here last Monday week to obtain rest and quiet and to read."

SCANDAL.

(From the *Indo-European* Correspondence.)

WE often speak of "scandal" as something that shocks or startles us, but the word has a much deeper meaning than that. Well instructed Catholics understand the word in its truer and more scientific sense of "stumbling block," something done which induces others to do the like, or at all events suggests it to them. Viewed in this light, scandal is one of the heaviest counts against a man who does wrong. He may obtain God's forgiveness more easily than he did the wrong, but the bad consequences of his deeds on others are incalculable. Man is an imitative creature, and the evil deeds of others, if they do not suggest kindred desires in him, at all events breed an unhealthy curiosity. A man attempts the life of a sovereign or some other man in authority, and we are pretty sure ere long to hear of a like attempt elsewhere. Cheap novels are a prolific source of scandal. In the United States they appear to do a huge amount of harm, and our Catholic contempararies constantly record cases of juvenile depravity traced to what are called "dime novels." Even the phlegmatic Hollanders' soul is moved by such pernicious trash, for we read of a murder committed at the Hague by one Marius Bogaerdt on the son of a retired Java merchant named DeJongh. The fellow enticed the boy out for a walk on the Downs, intending to keep him hid while he extorted a ransom from the father. The boy threatened to raise an alarm, and Bogaerdt killed him. The murderer confessed that he was earning enough to support himself and his mother, but he had been reading a story in the Holland *Illustrated Journal*, in which the abduction of a child to secure a large inheritance was related, and the idea had worked on him. Nor are the cheap novelists the only stumbling-blocks of the rising generation. Correspondents of provincial newspapers are not altogether blameless. Writing as these correspondents do, in a light and airy style of uncleanness and frivolity, they suggest a good deal to a number of youths of humble position, whose pleasures are few and meagre. They may not perhaps be answerable for heavy crimes, but they help to form a sort of pinchbeck youth—the counterfeit of the "jeunesse doree," whose doings the correspondents relate. Would that some one could be found to convince the youthful readers of novels and newspaper correspondences what precious noodles they become in the process of imitation.

The land demonstrations through the country continue to be numerous and successful. Thursday week being one of those holidays at which Mr. John Bright sneered so recently, the opportunity was taken advantage of to hold several meetings in support of the Land League programme. One of the chief features of the demonstrations was that in almost every case the chief speakers were priests, and the tone of their addresses proved that Father Sheehy's arrest has had little effect in checking the earnestness and patriotism of the Irish priesthood. Templemore on Thursday week was the scene of an exceptionally successful land meeting, over which the Rev. John Ryan presided. The same day saw demonstrations at Clonmany and Abbyfeale. On Sunday meetings were held at Duncannon, County Wexford, when the Very Rev. Canon Doyle, P.P., took the chair; Mr. Thomas Sexton, M.P., was present at a meeting at Castleconnell; and demonstrations were also held at Dunfanaghy and Annaduff.—*Nation*, June 4.